

MANY NEW PLAYS IN THE HOLIDAY WEEK

MANAGERS CROWD IN WITH NOVELTIES

CARROLL MC COMAS IN "POOR LITTLE THING"

EMMY WEHLEN IN "TO-NIGHT'S THE NIGHT"

IRENE FENWICK IN "THE SONG OF SONGS"

INA CLAIRE IN "LADY LUXURY"

MARGARET ILLINGTON IN "THE LIE"

THE MANY NEW PLAYS OF THE WEEK.

Managers to Crowd in the Plays Before the Holidays in Numbers Hitherto Unprecedented.

MONDAY—Century Lyceum—"Camille," by Alexandre Dumas. Park Theatre—"Polygamy" will be transferred from The Playhouse.

TUESDAY—Opening of the new Bandbox Theatre in East Fifty-seventh street with the stock company in Jerome K. Jerome's adaptation from the French of Jules Lemaitre called "Poor Little Thing."

The Eltinge Theatre—"The Song of Songs," adapted from "Das Hohe Lied," novel of Hermann Sudermann, by Edward Sheldon.

WEDNESDAY—The Playhouse—"Just Herself," comedy by Ethel Watts Mumford, to introduce Lydia Lopokova as an actress.

THURSDAY—Harris Theatre—Margaret Illington in "The Lie," drama by Henry Arthur Jones.

Shubert Theatre—"To-night's the Night," English musical play, acted here by the members of the London Gaiety Theatre Company, headed by George Grossmith and Emmy Wehlen?

FRIDAY—Astor Theatre—"Hello, Broadway," review by George Cohan. The Casino—"Lady Luxury," musical comedy by Rida J. Young and William Schroeder.

Irving Place Theatre—"Bundesbruder," farce, with Rudolf Christians and Heinrich Marlow in the leading roles.

on the stage. They are quite human. And being human, they are generally amusing, sometimes pathetic and not infrequently even tragic. In short, they have dramatic possibilities.

"In transferring them to the stage it was necessary to take their background with them. A polygamist without the background that explains him would be really too incredible—even on the stage. That background is largely religious. And therefore the play had to concern itself somewhat with a religion. With Mormonism. You understand, we had nothing against Mormonism. We were limited to it. It is the only religion in the civilized world that still believes in polygamy. And it believes authoritatively that polygamy is a divine principle, ordained by God for the salvation of the world."

teach and practice polygamy. These volumes are called "Proceedings before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the United States Senate in the matter of the protests against the right of the Hon. Reed Smoot, a Senator from the State of Utah, to hold his seat." The majority of the committee found on the evidence that the Mormons were preaching and practicing polygamy and that Reed Smoot, as one of the fifteen men responsible for the faith and practice of the Mormon Church, should be excluded from the Senate.

"Moreover, during the year 1910 four American magazines, *Everybody's*, *McClure's*, *Pearson's* and the *Cosmopolitan*, printed a series of articles exposing the forbidden practice of polygamy among the Mormons. A Utah newspaper, the *Salt Lake Tribune*, at that time was publishing a list of some

By LAWRENCE REAMER.

WILLARD MACK, whose apologetic pro vita sua appears elsewhere in THE SUN, suffers under a disadvantage for which his critics have not made allowance. The plays he has shown here were written at least a year or two ago and their themes possessed a novelty which is not to be found in them to-day. It is not the fault of Mr. Mack that "Help Wanted" came to New York before the play which is now in its last week at the Longacre Theatre.

What is most interesting in the appearance of the new playwright is his sense of the medium in which he is working. He is a man of the theatre if ever there was one, and unluckily he is not nearly so much a man of the world as he might be. His plays are still like all actor's plays. They are like all the plays written by actors in that they sacrifice logic to incident, plausibility to dramatic effectiveness and truth to the illusion of the theatre. That is generally characteristic of the less successful play of actors. After a while Mr. Mack's plays, if he continues to progress as he should, will be the kind of actor's plays written by Dion Boucicault when he was at the zenith of his successful productivity and at a later date by George Cohan.

It is in contrast to the flood of inex-

pert and amateurish dramas which make their appearance every year that the work of Mr. Mack attracts such favorable notice from all who respect the playwright as a recognized artist. He has learned his profession, he writes his scenes with skill, he possesses an insight into human life which is properly shown through the medium of the theatre. Unfortunately he seems to know but one side of life. For that reason it is to be deplored that collaboration is so unusual in this country. Such knowledge of the theatre as Mr. Mack possesses combined with the knowledge of the world which is the property of some other writers might result in some notable plays. But Mr. Mack will certainly write other works more successful even than "Kick In" and "So Much for So Much" whether he has a collaborator or not.

Constructively it seems difficult to understand why he did not bring his *William, Mr. Steadman*, into the play earlier. In spite of his appearance in the second act it is not until the third that his character is really revealed. Had the audience seen this lecherous employer in the first act and learned what sort of a man he was in his treatment of the girls about him he would have been a vastly more interesting figure to the spectators. That he went so far as to throw off one of his victims and let

her die as a result of his affection for her are facts which only the last act of the play reveals. Mr. Mack would of course answer that the use of the last act of the play as it was originally produced for the first act left him nothing for his closing scenes. But there still remained the acceptance of her reporter lover by the girl who had hitherto thought she could give so much for so much. But this is scarcely within

the field of the commentator, who is called upon to describe what he sees, not what might have been. It is, as Maud Muller remarked on a summer's day, the saddest of all sad words of tongue or pen, but it never seems so sad as in a play, that the right thing might have been, but was not.

If ever there was a pesky critter in the contemporary drama it is no less a person than *Diana Sturges*, who happens to be the heroine of "Driven," which Mr. Frohman has just presented with so much care at the Empire Theatre. For pure cussedness she is a good second to *Hedda Gabler*, who is at all events an Ibsen heroine and could never be expected to do or think normal things. This creation of Mr. Thurston starts out in the play with the determination to have as good a time as possible during the two years that remain to her of life. She is not going to "skirt and blouse it" as she has been doing, but decides to take the most beautiful things out of her wardrobe and enjoy them on Bond street. Then she makes love to a lieutenant and they are happy. It appears that they are even happier six months later when their flirtation is resumed on his return to London. She is for crowding all the pleasure possible into her last eighteen months of life, and when her husband decides that he must go to the House of Parliament rather than to a restaurant and the opera with her she accepts the invitation to accompany her lover. She even goes home to supper in his rooms.

But she lights out before the food has been tasted. He knew all the time she would come when he invited her, and that is too much. There are two portions of gelatine, two of *peche Melba* and a whole bottle of champagne, and she simply will not remain. He felt too certain she would come to him.

"I will not be counted on," was her observation as she left the room on an empty stomach.

If she had only known it she was counted out then and there for good. With all her desires for pleasure, and pleasure with the man she had come to love in the last year of her life, she leaves the room because he felt sufficiently sure she would come with him to order two portions of supper.

There is an splendid convention of the British theatre which is preserved in this play. Every time an English novelist sets out to be a playwright he believes that there is strength in one device. That is to begin his drama with a consultation between two or more physicians. Conan Doyle sent his sufferers off to Egypt. Mr. Thurston just condemns a lady to death. In both cases there was a recovery. There is no prouder tradition of the English stage than these doctors in the first act.

MR. O'HIGGINS EXPLAINS

How He and Miss Ford Came to Select "Polygamy."

Harvey J. O'Higgins made the following statements to a Sun reporter in reference to his play "Polygamy," which is so successful at the Playhouse. He said:

"Miss Harriet Ford and I decided to write a play about polygamy because in all the plays about marriage no one

The New Plays of the Present Week

All the holiday money that happens to be abroad on Christmas eve will have to be careful when it comes to the activity of the theatre managers this week. They have made a careful effort to get hold of it. There are to be new plays every night this week and on some nights there will be two novelties offered. Of course Christmas comes but once a year and that is why managers cheer.

On Monday night the actors of the French Theatre in their aerial perch atop the Century Theatre will be seen in Dumas's old "La Dame aux Camelias," which is to be played with Mme. Yorska in the leading role. Such a play might more properly take its place in the historical series, since it has ceased to possess more than a historical interest. When Sarah Bernhardt acts in the play this interest is increased, since both are national monuments of the French theatre. Jose Ruben will act *Armand* and Claude Bodellet will be seen as that grand old battler *Père Duval*.

The Bandbox Theatre in East Fifty-seventh street was formerly used as a German theatre by Adolf Philip, but has been acquired by a company of which Douglas Wood is the director. Mr. Wood has selected a large company of well known players and on Tuesday night they will show in "Poor Little Thing," by Jerome K. Jerome, what they are capable of accomplishing. There will be a series of dramas acted during the winter but the personnel of the company will not be changed. General excellence will be the aim of the organization and there are to be no established posts such as leading man, &c. Every actor will be expected to take the part to which he is best adapted. Naturally the dramas selected will be those especially suited to the intimate atmosphere of a small theatre. It is the present intention of the management to give one play every month.

The work to be acted on Tuesday night deals with student life in Paris. Mr. Jerome gave it to the company during his recent visit to this country. There is a committee of ladies back of Mr. Wood's plan and a number of them will be subscribers to the various plays to be given.

In the company are William Raymond, Eric Blind, Anita Clarendon, Frances Carson, Ernest Elton, Jeanette Farrell, Helen Fulton, Ida Goodfriend, Agnes Kemble, William Lorenz, Alma Mara, Dora Mayor, Lionel Pape, Irene Perels, Clara Randolph, Elsie Pridell, Edith Heabury and Beverley Stravens.

"The Song of Songs" made into a five act play by Edward Sheldon, will be seen at the Eltinge Theatre on Tuesday night. The American play-

There is a Merry Little Hustle to Get in the 'Holiday Week—The Broadway Turkey Snap

Playhouse on Wednesday. The play which Harrison Grey Fiske has selected for her new departure is called "Just Herself" and was written by Ethel Watts Mumford. In the company are Malcolm Duncan, Frederic Thomas, Frances Pendsten, Eleanor Gordon, Kate Mayhew, Olive Temple and Adolph Bowker. Concerning this enterprise the following facts have come from interested sources:

"Just Herself" is in three acts. It tells the amusing story of an unconventional girl who, amid a group of sham society people and social climbers, is—just herself. Fortunately for those who know and love the dancing art of Miss Lopokova the action of "Just Herself" calls for the display of all her terpsichorean skill.

"Flirtatious, eagerness and charm of personality, grace in repose and lightness and brightness of movement are Lopokovian characteristics familiar to all who have seen her exquisite dancing. She proved herself a great asset by her classic and interpretative dancing. Now she comes forward with the spoken word to aid her."

There will be two novelties on Christmas eve. The Harris Theatre will offer Margaret Illington in "The Lie," a new play by Henry Arthur Jones. Miss Illington has not been seen in New York since she acted in "Kindling," although her popularity in the West has constantly increased. Miss Illington has been surrounded by a capable company of actors selected by the Selwyn Company, which is responsible for the production. They are C. Aubrey Smith, Vincent Serrano, Violet Henning, G. W. Anson, Alfred Bishop, Gladys Morris, Surat Robson and others.

The Girl on the Film and who have since been appearing in different London successes.

"Others in the company are James Blakeley, whose performance in 'The Schoolgirl' and 'The Little Cherub' will be remembered by local audiences and who is now recognized as the favorite low comedian of London; Maurice Farina, last seen here in 'The Merry Countess' at the Casino, and who has since been singing in productions in London and Paris; Lauri De Frece, who starred at the Shaftesbury Theatre in the London presentation of 'The Queen of the Movies'; David Burnaby, son of an aristocratic family, who is hailed as England's best light comedian; Iris Hoey, the creator of 'Baby Mine' in London, and who ranks abroad after Marie Tempest as the greatest comedienne of the last generation, and Madge Saunders.

"The Hon. Helen Cecil Douglas-Scott-Montagu, twenty-two-year-old daughter of Lord Montagu of Beaulieu and a grandniece of the late Duke of Buccleuch, will make her initial American appearance in 'To-night's the Night.' Her father is the pioneer of British aircraft and he is serving in the army at present as Brigadier-Colonel of the Seventh Hampshire Regiment. The Hon. Miss Montagu is the heiress of one of the few British peerages which descends in the female line and she will some day become Baroness Montagu of Beaulieu in her own right."

This all very well in its way, Mr. Worm; but for those familiar with English musical plays the *bonne bruchie* is contained in these words:

"To-night's the Night" will not be changed in any respect for its local premiere, so that all its English sparkle and humor will be retained."

It is announced that the Astor Theatre, closed for the past two weeks, will open on Christmas night with "Hello, Broadway," a new review by George M. Cohan, which is described as "a musical crazy quilt in two sides and fourteen patches." Both the words and music are said to be the work of Mr. Cohan. In addition to Mr. Cohan and William Collier to bear the burden of the comedy there will be seen Louise Dresser, Belle Blanche, Rosalita Dolly, Peggy Wood, Grave Nolan, Florence Moore, Elsie Weller, Thelma Pinda, Lawrence Wheat, Martin Brown, Charles Clark, Sidney Jarvis and others.

Christmas night at the Casino will be celebrated by the production of "Lady Luxury," with a score by William Schroeder to a text by Rida J. Young. Ina Claire will have the leading role and the company will also include Harry Conner, Forrest Huff, Arthur Albion, Alan Mudie, Emile Lea, Alice Moffatt, Emily Fitzroy, Frank Andrews, Francis Bryan and others.

Rudolf Christians and Heinrich Marlow will be seen at the Irving Place Theatre on Christmas night in "Bundesbruder," which is announced as a new and amusing comedy. Every day from next Friday there will be a special matinee of "Snowwhite," the fairy play for children.



MARGARET ILLINGTON IN "THE LIE"

had ever written a play about that form of marriage—polygamy—and because in many of the recent discussions of marriage as a failure there has been a tendency to blame marriage because it is so monogamous. There has been an implication that polygamy would be an improvement. There has been a theory that man is naturally a polygamist and would be happier if he were not restricted.

"Polygamy, you know, is not a vice. It is something much more respectable—it is a crime. To be a polygamist a man must have signed marriage contracts with more than one wife, and the idea is that if the law allows him to make as many such contracts as he wished polygamy would be neither a vice nor a crime. It would be a sort of natural ambition permitted to fulfil itself beneficently under social control.

"Miss Ford and I were struck by the fact that no part had been taken in these discussions by any one who had ever tried polygamy or seen it tried. The partisans of polygamy were all in the position of the man who said that he believed in ghosts because he had never seen one. And yet there are express trains running every day from the Grand Central Station to a district where Americans have been living in polygamy, more or less, for the last fifty years. It seemed a legitimate enterprise for a dramatic author to save the public railroad fares by putting some of these modern polygamists

200 new cases of polygamy. And during the year that I was working on the exposure in *Everybody's Magazine* with the Hon. Frank J. Cannon, formerly United States Senator from Utah, I found it a matter of common knowledge in Utah that polygamy was flourishing there as easily as ever it did in Brigham Young's day.

"This knowledge is not common outside of Utah because the Mormon Church uses all its agents of publicity to conceal the fact. The Mormons had to give up the public practice of polygamy in 1890 after years of prosecution by the Federal authorities. Having organically abandoned it by revelation from God through their prophet, Utah was admitted to Statehood. The Mormons came immediately into control of the State and all its legal and political offices. They could no longer be prosecuted in Utah. They have been unsparingly practicing polygamy there ever since."

"After all life has its compensations! If you are not free to practice polygamy you may still write a play about it. And that is something no Mormon polygamist would dare to do, even with the financial backing of his prophet!"

THE WEEK'S CHANGES.

Plays to Be Seen on Other Stages This Week.

The Park Theatre, which has been closed since the last views of George Tyler's beautiful spectacle "The Garden of Paradise," will to-morrow house "Polygamy," the interesting play of life in Salt Lake City, which has been acted before large and appreciative audiences at the Playhouse.

May Irwin will come this week to the Standard Theatre to act in "Widow by Proxy." Catherine Cushing, who wrote this amusing piece, fitted Miss Irwin's peculiar talents exactly in it. In spite of the possible suggestion of widowhood in the piece there is only lively fun from the beginning to the end. Miss Irwin will not act this play again in New York. There will be no Christmas matinees.

Since "Sally" left New York the opera has been everywhere received with the greatest enthusiasm. Such a score as Kallman's has rarely been written during recent years and musically it is not only superior to all others heard in this city last winter, but its popular quality is irresistible. Now the opera is to be seen in New York for a few times. Beginning on next Thursday, Henry W. Savage will present "Sally" at the Grand Opera House for the remainder of the week. There will be matinees on Christmas Day and on Saturday. The delightful Mizz Hajas had the leading role still and is irresistible in it.